

Tender Breast Lump

If you notice a tender lump in one of your breasts or in the brown area around one of your nipples, you may have a "plugged duct". The area around it may be red and you may ache. It occurs when milk builds up in your breasts and there is pressure on the area. To prevent a plugged duct:

- Wear a comfortable nursing bra (not one that fits too tight or has underwire).
- Do not use a tight-fitting front baby carrier.
- Nurse 8 to 12 times a day.
- Change your nursing positions often: sit, lie down, use the football hold.

If you have a plugged duct, take the above steps. Before feedings, put a warm washcloth on your breast and gently massage the area to loosen the plug. Offer this breast first and position your baby so his chin is closest to the sore spot. With a few feedings, the plug should move toward and then out your nipple. It may look like thin spaghetti. Rest in bed. See your doctor if the plug doesn't move at all after more frequent nursings or if you have a fever.

Breast Infection



If one of your breasts is red and tender to touch (from a plugged duct or engorgement) and you feel like you've got the flu, you may have a breast infection. Do not stop nursing. Nurse more often. Put a warm, wet washcloth on your breast before feedings and offer your baby the affected breast first. Make sure your baby is positioned right. Rest in bed. See your doctor if you feel achy for more than one day. You may need an antibiotic.

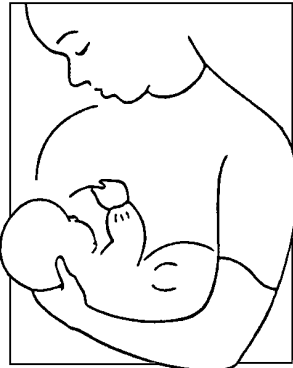
Correctly positioning your baby on your breast and nursing 8 to 12 times a day will prevent most breastfeeding problems in the early weeks.

Call the clinic for help before you consider offering formula to your baby. You can manage common problems!

You Goal/Notes:

Breastfeeding Basics

COMMON PROBLEMS



Leaking

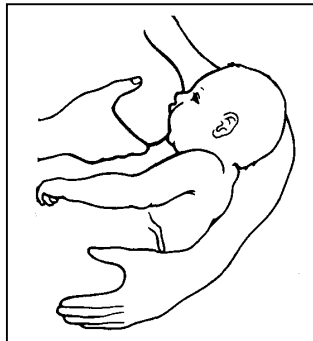
Most new mothers leak. You will leak less over time. Until then:

- During feedings, gently press on the nipple area of your other breast to stop the leaking.
- Wear nursing pads during and between feedings. Use cotton hankies or make your own pads from soft, cotton material. Wash as needed. Some stores sell washable and disposable nursing pads. Choose those without plastic liners.
- Breast or milk cups may cause soreness and more leaking. The milk they collect is not clean and should not be fed to the baby.

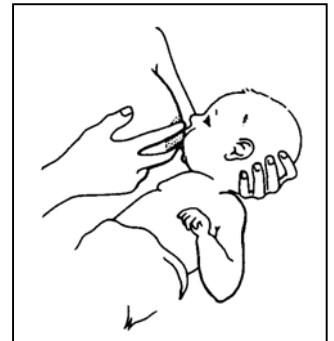
Sore Nipples

Soreness is common, but not normal. It is usually due to poor attachment of the baby on the breast. To avoid getting sore:

- Change your nursing positions: sit, lie down, use the football hold.
- Make sure your baby nurses with his mouth well up on your breast, not just the end of the nipple.*
- End feedings by putting your finger in the corner of his mouth.
- Let your nipples air dry after feedings: leave your bra flaps down.
- Avoid soaps, lotions, creams, breast pads with plastic liners, and breast shields.



Right



Wrong

If you are very sore, also start feedings on your least sore side. For comfort, put ice on your nipples before feedings and some breastmilk on them afterwards. Let them air dry. Call the clinic for help if you remain sore.

Uncomfortably Full Breasts

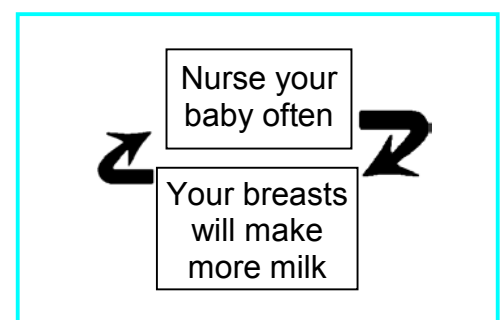
Some fullness is normal in the first weeks. However, if milk is allowed to build up in your breasts they may feel uncomfortably full, hard, or warm to the touch. This is called "engorgement". To prevent it:

- Make sure your baby nurses with his mouth well up on your breast, not just the end of the nipple.*
- Nurse on demand (at least 8 to 12 times a day) using both breasts.
- Nurse at night and during the day.

If you are engorged, take the above steps. Also put a warm washcloth on your breasts or take a warm shower to help your milk flow. Massage your breasts gently to release a little milk before feedings. Begin feedings on the fullest breast. If your breasts become red and tender, and you have a fever, call your doctor.

Too Little Milk

The more you nurse, the more milk you will have. If you don't think you have enough milk, nurse more often and nurse longer each time. It may also help to switch breasts every five minutes (a few times) each feeding. After about 2 days, your supply will be built up. Avoid nursing on a schedule and offering formula, water or other foods to your baby. These cause your body to make less milk. Be sure to drink to thirst, eat a healthy diet, and get plenty of rest. Check with your doctor if you are taking drugs.



* see the handout, 'Breastfeeding Basics – Getting Started'